

Message Text

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64

ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 541

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

S E C R E T TAIPEI 0035

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TW, CH, UR, US

SUBJECT: APPARENT SOVIET APPROACH TO ROC: EMBASSY COMMENT

REF: A. TAIPEI 7708

BM TAIPEI 0033

C. MOSCOW 0045

1. SUMMARY: WHILE LEAVING IT TO EMBASSY MOSCOW TO ASSESS HOW SERIOUS SOVIETS MAY BE IN SEEKING MODUS VIVENDI WITH ROC AND HOW FAR THEY MAY BE PREPARED TO GO, WE NOTE PREMIER CHIANG CLEARLY TREATS THE CHANG CONVERSATIONS IN MOSCOW AS SERIOUS SOVIET OVERTURE AND NOT RANDOM CONTACT. THERE ARE ELEMENTS ON TAIWAN WHO BELIEVE ROC MAY HAVE OR CAN DEVELOP SOME FORM OF "SOVIET CARD" TO PLAY. WE BELIEVE PREMIER, WHILE EMPHATICALLY RE-STATING POSITION THAT ROC WILL NOT HAVE RELATIONS WITH USSR, PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN COVERT CONTACT WITH SOVIETS AS HE HAS IN PAST. WE BELIEVE TOO THAT HE IS SEEKING SOME FORM OF USG REACTION AND FEEL OUR INTERESTS WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR TO THANK CCK FOR PROVIDING THIS INFORMATION AND TO STATE USG "UNDERSTANDS REASONS WHY ROC HAS DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE RELATIONS WITH USSR." END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE WE ARE NOT IN POSITION TO ASSESS DEGREE OF SOVIET INTEREST IN SEEKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ROC OR HOW FAR THEY MAY
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BE PREPARED TO GO, WE ASSUME SOVS HAVE NO INTENTION OF INCURRING ANY DEGREE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR TAIWAN ("RUSSIAN POINT FIVE" OF MEMO GIVEN US BY PREMIER -- REF B -- CAN BE CONSTRUED AS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO ROC). UNLIKE

EMBASSY MOSCOW (REF C), HOWEVER, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT SOVIETS SERIOUSLY CONSIDER ROC AS POTENTIAL CONTENDER FOR POWER ON MAINLAND FOLLOWING MAO'S DEATH. RATHER, MOSCOW APPEARS READY TO BOIL THE WATERS A BIT TO SEE WHAT SORT OF FISH RISE TO SURFACE.

3. IN ANY CASE, WE ARE STRUCK BY THE APPARENT DEGREE OF PLANNING BEHIND INVITATION TO CHANG (WHO HAD CAUSED SOME EMBARRASSMENT DURING HIS 1970 VISIT TO MOSCOW), AND BY NUMBER OF RUSSIAN ACADEMICIANS HE MET DURING THREE-DAY VISIT. (THESE DETAILS ALL CONTAINED REF B). EVEN ALLOWING FOR SOME INACCURACY IN CHANG'S ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE HEARD, WE NOTE THE CAREFULLY, INDEED DIPLOMATICALLY PHRASED ONE CHINA FORMULA (PARALLELING SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE) WITHIN WHICH SOVIETS SEEM PREPARED TO MANEUVER.

4. FROM ROC STANDPOINT, SITUATION IS EXTREMELY COMPLEX AND REQUIRES ULTIMATE IN CAREFUL HANDLING. THERE ARE ELEMENTS HERE, IN MILITARY, AMONG INTELLIGENTSIA, AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE, WHO BELIEVE ROC HAS OR MIGHT BE ABLE TO DEVELOP SOME FORM OF "SOVIET CARD" TO PLAY. PREMIER, WHO VIEWS THIS AS SERIOUS SOVIET APPROACH, KNOWS HE MUST BE VERY CAUTIOUS: WHILE TAIWANESE INTELLECTUALS MIGHT BE PREPARED TO WELCOME ANY MANEUVER LIKELY TO ASSIST THIS ISLAND'S CONTINUED SEPARATION FROM MAINLAND, CCK MUST WORRY ABOUT PRC AND USG REACTION, DEGREE OF CONFUSION CAUSED INTERNALLY AMONG A PEOPLE CONTINUOUSLY EXPOSED TO MASSIVE ANTI-COMMUNIST INDOCTRINATION AND EXTERNALLY AMONG RIGHT-WING FRIENDS, PARTICULARLY IN US AND JAPAN.

5. IN PROMPTLY GIVING AMBASSADOR DETAILS OF CHANG'S CONVERSATIONS IN MOSCOW, WHILE RE-STATING HIS FIRM OPPOSITION TO RELATIONS WITH USSR (AGAIN REITERATED IN TILLMAN DURDIN INTERVIEW WHICH RAN IN NY TIMES JAN 1 AND RECEIVED FULLY MEDIA TREATMENT HERE). CCK HAS TRIED TO DEMONSTRATE HE IS PLAYING SQUARE WITH US. WE BELIEVE HE ALSO IS SEEKING USG REACTION TO POSSIBILITY OF SOME SORT OF ROC RELATIONSHIP WITH USSR. IN ANY EVENT, WE EXPECT SOME COVERT CONTACT WITH USSR WILL
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CONTINUE TO BE MAINTAINED AS IT HAS IN PAST.

6. WE CONSIDER US INTERESTS AT THIS POINT RATHER MIXED. WE DO NOT WANT THE ONUS OF POLICING ROC RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES. INDEED, THERE MIGHT BE SOME VALUE TO US IN SEEING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DIVERSIFICATION OF ROC RELATIONSHIPS, EXTENDING EVEN TO THE SOVIET BLOC. BUT WE DO HAVE THE PROBLEM OF THE PRC RELATIONSHIP. WE PARTICULARLY WANT TO AVOID ANY CHARGES BY

PEKING OF SOVIET-AMERICAN COLLUSION IN THIS ARENA. ON BALANCE, WE BELIEVE US INTERESTS WOULD BEST BE SERVED BY HAVING AMBASSADOR, UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, THANK PREMIER FOR SHARING HIS INFORMATION WITH US, AND GO ON TO STATE THE USG UNDERSTANDS

THE REASONS WHY THE ROC HAS DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. BY SO DOING, WE WOULD GIVE CCK A RATHER NEGATIVE REACTION WITHOUT HAVING TO SAY IN SO MANY WORDS THAT WE THINK PURSUING THE "MOSCOW CONNECTION" IS NOT A GOOD IDEA-- AND WE WOULD LEAVE IT TO HIM TO COME TO US IF MATTERS CHANGE LATER. IN EVENT THAT AT SOME TIME USG IS CALLED UPON TO COMMENT PUBLICLY ON RUSSIAN OVERTURES TO ROC OR TO USSR-ROC RELATIONS IN ANY FORM, WE BELIEVE OUR REPLY SHOULD BE ALONG THE LINES THAT WE ARE AWARE OF THE REPORTS, BUT CONSIDER ROC'S FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS TO BE A MATTER BETWEEN IT AND THE OTHER PARTIES.

7. RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE AMBASSADOR BE INSTRUCTED TO REITERATE TO PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO THE APPRECIATION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR THIS SHARING OF INFORMATION, AND TO SAY THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT "UNDERSTANDS THE REASONS WHY THE ROC HAS DECIDED NOT TO PURSUE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. MCCONAUGHY

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